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1989-90

CANADA/UK

March 3, 1990

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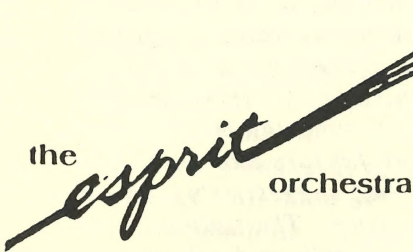
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THE ESPRIT ORCHESTRA
Alex Pauk
Music Director and Conductor

CANADA/UK
Saturday March 3, 1990
Jane Mallett Theatre



PROGRAMME

Solo Artist - Douglas Perry, viola
with a special appearance by Michael Cote, percussion

Far Calls. Coming, Far! (1988) John Burke

* At First Light (1982) George Benjamin

INTERMISSION

** Freewheeling/Free Choice/Freedom (1989-1990) Gary Hayes

** Peregrine (1989-1990) John Beckwith

* Toronto Premiere

** World Premiere commissioned by Esprit

The two World Premieres in tonight's programme are made possible through the generous support of the Laidlaw Foundation.

The 1989/90 season sponsor for the Principal Clarinet Chair is Buffet-Crampon.

Tonight's concert is being recorded by CBC Radio Music for broadcast at a later date on "Two New Hours" in Toronto, 94.1 on the FM dial.

Please note that should an artist be unable to appear, the Esprit Orchestra reserves the right to substitute. All programmes are subject to change without notice.

For further information regarding The Esprit Orchestra, please call 599-7880 or write to:

The Esprit Orchestra
Chalmers Building
35 McCaul Street, Suite 410
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1V7

PROGRAMME NOTES

Far Calls. Coming, Far!

John Burke

Far Calls. Coming, Far! was written in response to a request from la Societe de musique contemporaine du Quebec for a short piece to be included on a concert given as part of the 1988 Olympic Arts Festival in Calgary. In keeping with the spirit of the event and the instrumentation provided, considerable use is made of fanfare-like material, largely in an atmospheric way, suggestive of sounds reverberating and moving in space. The static harmonic field out of which the various calls and echoes emerge is a chord spanning the entire range of the instruments based on the typical fanfare interval of the fourth. It represents the vast snowscape resounding with distant music that I imagined while writing the work. The title is taken from the closing line of James Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake'.

John Burke

John Burke studied composition with Bruce Mather at McGill University, with Eugene Kurtz in Paris, and at the University of Michigan where he received his doctorate.

The recipient of numerous important awards and commissions, he has had his music performed by major new music groups, orchestras and solo artists throughout Canada, in the United States and Europe, at prestigious festivals including Metz and the ISCM World Music Days.

Besides his activities as a composer, John Burke has taught music theory and electronic music at several Canadian universities.

Coming performances include the premiere of a new work commissioned by the Elision ensemble of Melbourne, Australia. Among future projects is a piece for the Duo Contemporain of Holland and a one-act opera.

the *esprit* orchestra

At First Light

George Benjamin

At First Light was written in 1982 for Simon Rattle and the London Sinfonietta. In this piece, the music crystallizes some two-thirds of the way through into a succession of long-drawn chords, which, though not loud, are obviously the work's climax. Benjamin divides the piece into three movements, but the divisions are not emphatic in the classical manner. Rather they mark stages in a single flowing design. The inspiration was Turner's 'Norham Castle Sunrise' (Tate Gallery). But the music is not programmatic; it allows Turner's colour and texture, and particularly the relationship he implies between solid objects and a continuous surface, to suggest musical processes which naturally obey their own rules. The work shows Benjamin's ear for sonority. He has the gift for making sounds glow, which is as much a matter of spacing as of harmony though in the end it is the chords as abstractions which are the music's real lifeblood.

George Benjamin

George Benjamin was born in 1960. He started piano lessons at the age of seven and began composing when he was nine. From 1974 he studied composition and piano with Peter Gellhorn, and then piano in Paris with Yvonne Loriod. He studied composition with Olivier Messiaen who has been a formative influence on the composer and a lasting source of encouragement. Between 1978 and 1982 he studied music at King's College, Cambridge under Alexander Goehr.

Faber Music became Benjamin's publisher in 1977 and since 1980, when "Ringed by a Flat Horizon" was performed in the BBC Proms, Benjamin's works have been programmed throughout the world by such orchestras as the London Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw, the Toronto Symphony, the New York Philharmonic and the New Japan Philharmonic. He is increasingly active as a pianist and conductor both for his own and other music, and has been widely involved in music education, especially with the London Sinfonietta and the Royal College of Music. All his musical activities were featured extensively during his residency at the King's Lynn Festival. Compositional projects during 1986/88 included a large electronic and instrumental piece for IRCAM in Paris and an orchestral commission from Southwest German Radio.

Freewheeling/Free Choice/Freedom

Gary Hayes

Freewheeling/Free Choice/Freedom is a work that seeks to make a statement on the suppression of blacks in South Africa and the system of apartheid. My awareness of this situation is quite recent but my level of outrage high. Ironically, as I have written the work, I have watched with interest the beginnings of revision in that country. One could almost hope to live to see it resolved in one's lifetime.

Music as a means of expressing particular sentiments is far from satisfying. When I decided to write this work, I realized that I would be up against some interesting pitfalls. I could use thematic material from South Africa, typical musical elements found in their music, vocal utterances in Xhosa, pit national anthem against national anthem . . .

In the end, I chose to write a piece of music first, a piece influenced by African music second, and a protest piece third. After listening to hours of African music, the simplest way of synthesizing it was to not try, but to just let it happen by osmosis. One definitive nod to the music of South Africa is the use of Nkosi Sikileli Africa, the unofficial black national anthem, as a major thematic element towards the end of the work.

Mr. de Kierk, do the right thing and end white minority rule in South Africa.

Gary Hayes

Gary Hayes, born in Hamilton in 1948, showed an early interest in music. He studied piano, violin, percussion and theory, beginning at the age of seven, and performed in an orchestra and a variety of bands. He entered the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music where he obtained his Bachelor of Music degree in Composition. His teachers there were John Beckwith and John Weinzwieg.

After graduating, he was one of a group of six composers who formed ARRAYMUSIC. A number of his works were performed in concerts organized by this group, and his chamber work "Pythian I", written for these concerts, was a winner in the 1973 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Young Composers Competition.

In 1975, he joined the CBC as a Music Producer in Ottawa, where he still makes his home. Now Executive Producer, Radio Music & Arts with CBC Ottawa, he has continued to be active as a composer. His music has been commissioned by such groups as New Music Concerts (Toronto), the National Art Centre Orchestra, the Canadian Brass and Espace Musique, and performed and broadcast in Canada, America, England and Europe.

Peregrine John Beckwith

In four instrumental chamber works - "Taking a Stand" for brass (1972), "Musical Chairs" for strings (1973), "Keyboard Practice" for keyboards (1979) and the multipurpose quintet, "Case Study" (1980) - I called for miming and processional actions as an essential element of musical argument. The problem, presenting itself in various ways, was basically always the same: how to make different spatial positionings of the instruments appear naturally motivated by the musical content. The idea of setting the problem in the classical context of a concerto had long appealed to me and I appreciated Alex Pauk's willingness to sponsor its application in "Peregrine".

The title draws attention to the 'travels' undertaken by the viola soloist. To Canadians it may evoke an early nineteenth century British official, Sir Peregrine Maitland, whose parents could not have foreseen when they named him how uncomfortable his travels to faraway colonies would prove.

The name also accords with the borrowed melody on which the piece is largely based - the ninth Gregorian psalm-tone, called the 'tonus peregrinus' by reason of its odd migration from one mode to another. This well known two-phrase chanting formula is quoted in Bach's Magnificat, Mozart's Requiem, and elsewhere. Its associations for me are musical rather than specifically religious - but I was obviously drawn to the implication of 'travelling' found in its line.

Though not programmatic, "Peregrine" is both literally and metaphorically a voyage - a performer's trip around a performing space, and an individual's trip to strange territories (dreamland?) or through life's vicissitudes. At an early stage in planning, the violinist/traveller seemed to need a companion, and I chose the percussionist for this. They offset each other, as travelling pairs often do: Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, for example. Dramatically they may be regarded as hero and anti-hero. Episodes of the work's 'peregrinations' include a ukelele chorus, a mysteriously mistuned second viola, a succession of nine isolated instrumental sounds rather like animal cries (the soloist responds by imitating them), an open-string pavane, and an interrupted procession in strathspey time.

At the busiest point of "Taking a Stand", one player tries to dominate the ensemble and is carried off stage playing. There is a comparable moment of threatened domination in the music of "Peregrine" - but its resolution is quite different.

The similarity of the title to the surname of the viola soloist, Douglas Perry, good friend and admired colleague, is coincidental.

John Beckwith

John Beckwith is known primarily as a composer, but his varied and active career in music has also included the roles of pianist, teacher, lecturer, university administrator, writer, editor, newspaper critic and columnist, broadcaster, and board member of concert-giving societies and other professional organizations.

He was born on Canada's Pacific Coast, in Victoria, British Columbia, in 1927. There he studied piano from the age of six with Ogretta McNeill and Gwendoline Harper and sang in choirs under Stanley Bulley's direction. Moving at 18 to Toronto, where he still makes his home, he continued piano studies with Alberto Guerrero. A Canadian Amateur Hockey Association arts award enabled him to study composition (1950-52) in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Subsequent studies with John Weinzweig and Mieczyslaw Kolinski were also influential on his development.

Beckwith has often been fascinated by regional musical traits and Canadiana, from the early chamber-music settings of James Reaney's "The Great Lakes Suite" (1949) to works such as "Upper Canadian Hymn Preludes" (1976-77). "His is perhaps the most characteristically English-Canadian voice in composition" wrote Istvan Anhalt in 'Encyclopedia of Music in Canada' in 1981.

John Beckwith's opera "Crazy to Kill" was introduced at the 1989 Guelph Spring Festival. His choral work "Harp of David" (six psalm settings) will be released on a Centrediscs compact disc this spring, in a performance by the Vancouver Chamber Choir. On March 17 the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, will present a program of Beckwith's music, marking his (early) retirement from the Faculty position he has held for thirty-eight years.

THE ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

March 3, 1990 Jane Mallett Theatre

Conductor and Music Director: Alex Pauk

Flute	Douglas Stewart	Percussion	Michael Cote
Oboe	Jon Peterson		Richard Sacks
Clarinet	Gwilym Williams***		David Campion
	Richard Thomson	Piano	John Hess
Bassoon	Elizabeth Brickenden	Violin I	Diane Tait
Horn	Robert McCosh		(Concert Master)
	Guy Edrington		Anne Armstrong
Trumpet	Robert Grim		Valerie Syvester
Trombone	John Dowden		
	Violin II	Jayne Maddison	
		Ruth Fazal	
	Viola	Nicole Zarry	
		Douglas Perry	
		David Harding	
		Ryhlh Peel	
	Cello	Paul Widner	
		Elaine Thompson	
	Bass	Roberto	
		Occhipinti	

*** The Principal Clarinet Chair is sponsored by Buffet Crampon.

TONIGHT'S SOLO ARTIST

Douglas Perry, viola

A fervent believer in the performance of music in its relevant style and appropriate acoustic, Douglas Perry has, throughout his career, focused on establishing musical institutions that provide unique and authentic performances in both contemporary and baroque fields.

Past Artistic Director of ARRAYMUSIC, and a founding member of TAFELMUSIK, with whom he still performs, records and tours, Douglas Perry's experience and expertise have made him one of Canada's most versatile musicians. His chamber performances can be heard on numerous compact discs which include the recently released "GEMS" with Joseph Petric and the double album "LYREST - A Portrait of Petlura on the Day He was Killed" with pianist Lubomyr Melnyk, as well as the CBC Vancouver Orchestra.

For the past two summers, he has performed the music of Christos Hatzis and other composers at the Athens Festival in Greece and recently a film for which he scored the music was aired on O.T.V. He has performed and recorded with such artists as Walter Trampler, Anton Kuerti and Elly Ameling as well as touring Europe in a dance/performance role with Robert Desrosiers. He is currently involved in the development of a multi-media show called "EarthRise" and is principal viola of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra as well as The Esprit Orchestra.

CONDUCTOR

Alex Pauk

Born and educated in Toronto, Alex Pauk undertook further studies in conducting in Japan. After settling in Vancouver and becoming a key figure in that city's new music scene, he returned to his native Toronto in 1979 to concentrate on composing concert and film music. Since founding The Esprit Orchestra in 1983, he has maintained a continuous creative output including orchestra works (Mirage and Echo Spirit Isle), chamber works (Water from the Moon and The Seventh Aura for electric strings) and a radiophonic montage (Nomad). Recently Mr. Pauk had a major new piece, Cosmos, premiered by the Orchestra Symphonique de Quebec.

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The Esprit Orchestra gratefully acknowledges our contributors and we look forward to their continued support:

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